

Feedback on AMP Strategies from Spring 2011 Survey and Open Forums 9/29/11

FEEDBACK IS INDICATED IN RED

General Comments/Suggestions:

- Need to better articulate and link the goals, objectives, and strategies, including the language of these elements.
- The items related to diversity seem to be scattered. Is there a way to pull them together into a single strategy?
- For organization and presentation, suggest clustering like strategies together and present the more detailed suggested plans under each strategy. These should also be tied to the new performance funding measures – and possibly consider using these as one of the new qualitative performance factors that are specific to Ship.
- Fees: 1) Can we set fees? Yes, we can propose new fees. They have to be justified as specialized costs that are not already covered by the educational services fee and technology tuition fee. 2) Who has to approve them? The President's Cabinet and then University's Council of Trustees. Not sure whether they then have to go to PASSHE or the Board of Governors for final approval. 3) How many fees can be charged? There is a limit on the amount of fees that can be charged – this limit is set by the Board of Governors. The limit is a particular percentage of the tuition.

AMP Strategies

The following strategies have been identified as crucial to the development and implementation of the Academic Master Plan, and the achievement of its goals and objectives. Economic resources, faculty and administrative resources, technological resources, library and building resources are necessary to facilitate the plan.

Strategy A:

Create a focused public relations/marketing plan and committee to oversee implementation of the plan and coordination with the campus, to raise the University's profile and assist in the recruitment of students, faculty, and staff, and in the engagement of alumni and potential student employers and internship placements. (Supports Goals/Objectives 2-3, 4-1, 5-4)

Some felt this should not be the top priority, while other did feel that it should be. (Note that it's placement first in the list was not meant to indicate that it's the top priority.)

“Of the universities I've been at this is the worst at publicizing itself.” This should not be de-emphasized - it is about recruiting, academic rigor and reputation, service to the community, and draws revenue to the university. We need to better at actively publicizing faculty being in the community, the places we take students, the things our students do – these tangible concrete examples are more effective and connect more immediately than the generic billboards. We are being out-manuevered by other

universities with respect to marketing ourselves. This emphasizes the importance of other divisions recognizing the importance of student learning as the primary goal of the university.

Why should I go to SU? Impressive faculty, variety programs, UG focus, small class size, moderate price, we are willing to strategize, mission, etc. These things are good and we should publicize them.

Strategy B:

Adopt a new set of recruitment, tuition, and scholarship policies and programs to increase the academic profile and diversity of the incoming student population. (Supports Goals/Objectives 2-3, 2-5, 5-4)

Which definition of diversity are we using; what does this mean? There are several different definitions of diversity at Ship. Perhaps we could agree on one common definition at Ship.

Include international students in this strategy. Expand the office for international students and support; build an infrastructure that can really support more international students (e.g. shuttle service for newly arriving international students to Ship).

What leeway do we have with tuition and scholarships? One option is to offer scholarships to HS students at end of junior year or beginning of senior year. Other schools do this and we currently wait until the end of the senior year when these possible students have already chosen to go somewhere else. Are our scholarship requirements too low? There are several detailed suggested tactics that the Task Force has compiled – new ways to do things with recruitment, tuition, and scholarships.

The suggestion was made to reduce the out-of-state tuition costs to 150% for highly qualified out-of-state students as a way to increase the profile and diversity of the student population. This would also help attract international students. This would bring students to PA for school and also keep them in PA to help with the economy of PA.

What can be done to acquire more scholarship funds from the Foundation?

There is interest in offering college classes at the local high schools – Ship has been approached by several different high schools. These courses could be taught by our faculty, and would introduce prospective students to our faculty and college courses. (Extended Studies continues to discuss the possibility with the colleges and academic departments.)

Is there any strategy for increasing honors enrollment? What are the plans for an honors college? There are plans to have the honors program integrated into the new residences halls through living and learning communities.

There should be active recruitment of students by the academic departments, especially with respect to high achieving high school students. Departments could be reaching out to students by calling, letters, and visiting high schools. This should be coordinated with the Admissions office. Some departments ARE currently these activities. Some best practices could be culled from those departments and used as models for other departments to consider.

Strategy C:

Recruit and retain a highly qualified and diverse faculty to enhance the quality of the University through teaching, learning, and scholarship. Investigate and implement approaches to increase the level of faculty diversity. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-2, 2-3, 2-5, 3-1, 3-3, 4-1 thru 4-5, 5-1 thru 5-4)

Hire more faculty who can teach in more than one area – perhaps two subspecialties and across departments. This would also for a more interdisciplinary perspective to grow. It would also allow partial staffing needs in multiple departments to be met – partial needs in two departments could be met by hiring one new shared faculty member rather than delaying the hiring until there is enough pent-up need to hire one new faculty in each department.

There is pressure to publish to achieve tenure. This diverts time from interacting with UG students in the classroom. (But some faculty present thought the pressure to publish isn't too bad.) The requirements for promotion were discussed – the faculty set these standards, not the Deans.

Strategy D:

Develop an entry/first year experience for all incoming students to facilitate students' transition to the University, increase students' connection to and engagement in the University community, increase student retention and success, anchor them in the disciplines, and improve the academic climate on campus. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-3, 2-2, 2-5)

Provide for an active and ongoing dialogue between the general education coordinating committee, academic day/first year group, and first year experience discussions.

Create a "100 Things to Do Before You Leave Ship" campaign that begins with students when they first arrive at Ship and continues through their time at Ship.

One possible first year experience model for freshman – clusters of first year general education courses that all address a common issue – cohort of students who take the same classes and work on the same issue and same assignments. Need skill building, things like how to read a book, how to take notes, how college work and expectations are different than high school. Costs money to do it well – money well spent that pays off in the long run.

Strategy E:

Implement strategies to increase student retention and decrease students' time to degree completion. Investigate the causes of low retention and persistence rates in SU's under-represented groups, and develop measurable strategies to improve these rates. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-1 thru 2-5, 3-1 thru 3-3, 4-1, 4-3, 4-4, 5-1, 5-4)

Combine strategies E & G: investigate, then develop support services, then implement them.

High priority items are those that deal with student retention – first/entry year experience and dedicated point person for retention.

We have one of the highest graduation rates in the system. Are the lowest performing students admitted simply for their tuition money, with little concern for their actual success and graduation?

Graduation rates are not the same as having learned anything.

Strategy F:

Conduct a careful review of resource allocations and policies that control students' movement into and through majors and colleges (on a three year cycle) to provide consistency and increase students' access to the coursework they need. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-2, 1-4, 2-1, 2-2, 2-5, 4-3, 5-1, 5-4)

Suggest changing this to a two year cycle to be consistent with the university's two year budget planning process.

Strategy G:

Develop differentiated support services for diverse populations of students in the SU community to meet the unique needs of high-achieving, at-risk, transfer, non-traditional, military/veteran, and off-campus students. Fund the Learning Center, Testing Center, Office of Disability Services, Counseling Center, and other student support services at a level that is proportional to the needs of existing and incoming students. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-2, 1-4, 2-1, 2-2, 2-4, 2-5, 4-3, 4-4, 5-1, 5-4)

Combine strategies E & G: investigate, then develop support services, then implement them.

This is a good list of needs. But we need something more specific in the funding aspect of these – check the MSCHE self-study and recommendations. Learning Center needs to have a stable source of funding – perhaps a specific fee or an allotment tied to the number of students at Ship each academic year. There are national standards for resourcing and funding per student – look at these standards. We should take these standards as seriously as we do the MSCHE standards – especially since in some cases the student needs are acute and severe. This type of support is critical to retention and success in class. Students often have to wait to get in to the learning center due to low staffing.

The learning center would like to expand services such as grad student writing and to off-campus locations - investigate a special fee to support these services.

Veterans – this is an increasing population and with very specific needs - a specific center with dedicated staffing is needed.

We have already made some strides by co-locating the counseling and health centers, and instituting the health fee.

There is no slack in many areas – there is a lack of flexibility and low support for students and lower quality of support for students. For example, the learning center is understaffed for the need.

We need to provide the right tools to students who need extra and specialized assistance.

There is a growing divide between the Philadelphia suburbs, and we are reaping some of the state testing results. There is concern that school districts are teaching to the state tests and as a result that students are coming to Ship less prepared than they should be. This impacts their success rate as a freshman, being underprepared for college courses, and the load on our support systems.

The expectations for college are different than those for high school. Some students think all they need to do is memorize. You have to understand concepts in college and this boggles some students. Some high schools have a policy that every question on a test has to be reviewed the day before the test.

Strategy H:

Identify and develop ways to integrate graduate students into the University community to foster their professional development and academic interests through classroom and field experiences, research, scholarship, service learning, and graduate assistantships. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-2, 1-4, 2-1 thru 2-5, 3-1, 3-3, 4-1, 4-3, 5-1, 5-2, 5-4)

Be clear that we are not talking about grad students teaching classes – change wording to clarify this. Articulate the responsibilities of GA and that they know what they can and cannot do.

Strategy I:

Develop and fund the library to establish it as a center for teaching, learning and scholarship. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-1 thru 1-4, 2-1 thru 2-3, 3-1, 4-1 thru 4-4, 5-1, 5-3, 5-4)

Currently, the library is a place for many resources that support faculty, not just scholarly resources – this should be reflected in the language. An example is resources demonstrating how to construct writing assignments to avoid plagiarism. This speaks to two things – library services and a space for co-locating many support services and resources. Would it also make sense to locate academic student support services to the CUB? Possibly combine this with strategies E and G?

Strategy J:

Increase funding for academic technology initiatives to ensure quality instruction, engaged learning, and students' facility with relevant and cutting-edge technologies. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-1 thru 1-4, 2-1 thru 2-3, 3-1, 4-1 thru 4-4, 5-1, 5-3, 5-4)

Have all of these really been addressed by the technology fee? Examples are Smart Board and other classroom technologies that K-12 teachers have in their home schools, but do not see when they come to Ship as students – they tell us that Ship classrooms are not up to par with their own classrooms with respect to technology. There was a suggestion to investigate what local K-12 school districts have in classroom technology that we don't have. We also need to investigate and incorporate instructional technology needs such as clickers/remote response systems and address technology that are not computers – electronic computerized equipment.

Strategy K:

Commit to preserving small class sizes and low student to faculty ratios to ensure individualized instruction and a quality educational experience, all of which are differentiating characteristics of an SU education. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-2 thru 1-4, 2-2, 2-3, 2-5, 4-1 thru 4-4, 5-1, 5-3, 5-4)

This is one of the most important strategies.

Comment about Strategy K & is it comic relief. Do we really have small class sizes? A table of data on class sizes was discussed – while our class sizes have increased during the last two years, compared to others we do still have small class sizes. Comment that this is good, that it is included, that it is something we do, and should continue and emphasize.

Class size seems to be increasing – 40 is too many. PSU has small classes also, it's a seller.

The number of students in a class changes the way a faculty member assesses the students. Larger class sizes can reduce quality and have the effect of dumbing down the curriculum.

Our small classroom sizes can help maintain small class sizes.

We need a plan on how we will maintain our class sizes. This could affect our appropriations.

Strategy L:

Establish and fund a grants office that provides 1) dedicated administrative support for the pursuit, acquisition and management of grant activities, 2) a grant writer to assist faculty and increase the yield rate of SU's external grant applications, and 3) a streamlined grant financial management process to enhance scholarship, teaching, and learning. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-2, 1-4, 2-2, 2-3, 3-1 thru 3-3, 4-1 thru 4-5, 5-2, 5-4)

Strategy M:

Establish a periodic review of the faculty evaluation, promotion, and tenure criteria and process, to clarify expectations, increase transparency of the processes, provide a mechanism for feedback, and ensure that practices important to the mission of the University are tied to the assessment of faculty. (Supports Goals/Objectives Goals 1-3, 1-4, 2-1, 2-2, 2-4, 2-5, 3-1 thru 3-3, 4-1 thru 4-4, 5-1, 5-2, 5-4)

This is a CBA item and requires statewide discussion. The current P/T situation is better than it used to be, with respect to both transparency and the appropriate people being promoted. The same comments also came up in MSCHE self-study and review. There is a need to do a better job of clarifying and setting expectations up front – this is likely at the root of the discontent.

Evaluation is also covered by CBA and that process also needs to be clarified. There is a lot of variation across the departments. Promote transparency of the process by providing more documentation of the procedures. Lots of materials are already on the web – look at these to see what's missing and what could be made more clear and/or accessible. Provide earlier and constructive feedback with suggestions for change/improvement to better prepare for P/T. Some good models are needed for departments to follow. A good approach would be to investigate models that provide consistent mentorship and feedback during a faculty member's first 3-5 years at Ship.

Set up a process for the periodic (perhaps once every 8-10 years) review of the P/T and sabbatical guidelines at Ship. These are Ship-specific items, not CBA items.

Strategy N:

Establish a process and mechanism for the periodic review and revision of the general education (core) curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of 21st century students and workers. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-1 thru 1-4, 2-2, 4-3, 4-4, 5-1, 5-3, 5-4)

Strategy O:

Develop an entity that identifies new academic opportunities, conducts environmental scanning and market needs analyses, and investigates the feasibility and resource implications of such programs to support the existing university curriculum committee process and ensure that the University's curriculum remains current and relevant for the 21st century workplace and students. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-1 thru 1-4, 2-1 thru 2-3, 3-1 thru 3-3, 4-1 thru 4-4, 5-3, 5-4)

Combine strategies O and R. Combining these makes sense, and maximizes and prioritizes the needs and resources. Also, grouping these naturally brings together “where are we, where do we want to go” – assess, evaluate, and plan. Need to also institutionalize and create an ongoing AMP process – perhaps incorporate AMP into the governance document. But, is the same true for the processes that lead to the development and annual review and use of the Facilities Master Plan and IT Strategic Plan?

Change “entity” to “process”. Clarify that this suggestion is to “support” not “supplant” the UCC process.

This could perhaps be a subcommittee of UCC or of the Planning and Budget committee. IR is woefully understaffed – boost their staffing and make this the entity that provides such support.

The detailed tactics are good.

Consider options for reformatting how the academic day runs. Allow greater flexibility in class scheduling, i.e. the number of days and the time periods that classes meet. For example, allow for a class to meet every day for four weeks. We use such models for off-campus classes, could they also be applied on campus. (Such models would also help international students with financial constraints. They would also help bring international faculty on exchange – teaching an accelerated class as an adjunct.)

Consider creating an interdisciplinary arts program, and possibly a music concentration within this.

Consider offering more culture classes rather than just language instruction classes. For example – Spanish language and culture.

Find a way to offer music lessons for credit. A standard hr credit course = 5 students, 1 hour each per week OR 10 students, 30 min each per week for an extra fee. Possibly use the internship formula or student teaching supervision formula for music lessons. Investigate a lessons fee. Investigate models for granting credit and compensating individualized instruction in the arts.

This goal and what we do is not just about what happens in the majors – it is also about creating well-rounded individuals. Well roundedness includes an awareness and broadening of perspective through current events and the arts. The arts are a different way of knowing. We need a master calendar to better coordinate and communicate performances. If faculty know of performances well in advance, they could incorporate them into their courses as appropriate to the course content.

The performing arts seem to be sidelined at Ship. We need to better integrate the academic performing arts departments in the planning of arts events on campus. Also, arts programming needs to be better integrated with educational experiences at Ship – and provide a broader understanding of the arts and their role in personal development and society. Is there a way to include the arts more actively in the strategies and detailed tactics? We need promote and enhance an awareness of the arts, and make the arts an integral part of the university experience. The arts contribute to the intellectual excitement of a university. The arts are the underpinning of western culture and an aspect of global culture. The arts also broaden students' perspective.

There is a disconnect between the arts, culture, and academics at SU. There used to be a faculty/student committee that worked on bringing cultural events and arts programming to the university. This is dwindling and the academic departments are not involved in programming decisions now. There is a need for art and cultural enhancement for students. Students also need to learn to communicate within the context of the art and culture.

Add a pre-engineering program because to have an engineering program you need to have lots of resources to put into it, and those resources benefit the rest of the university. The 3:2 PSU program needs to be reviewed for its effectiveness – PSU does not accept students to chemical engineering and a couple of others.

Strategy P:

Assess and expand experiential learning activities to provide students with opportunities for skills development and the application and transfer of theory to practice. Experiential learning activities include research, internships, field work, service learning, volunteerism, short term study abroad, collaborative assignments and projects, and capstone projects. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-1 thru 1-4, 2-2 thru 2-5, 3-1 thru 3-3, 4-1 thru 4-5, 5-1 thru 5-4)

Is there any strategy on increasing study abroad. Although the current international study office is great, it needs to be focused on this topic and be better resourced. Consider moving this from student affairs to academic affairs.

Strategy Q:

Provide a structure for the regular planning, coordination and communication between academic affairs, student affairs, and student government to increase the opportunities for experiential learning, the application of knowledge outside the classroom, broaden students' awareness and appreciation of differences, and enhance the academic climate. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-2, 1-4, 2-1 thru 2-5, 3-1 thru 3-3, 4-1 thru 4-4, 5-1 thru 5-4)

We need to have some "forced" functionalities – i.e. discussions of the front-line individuals rather than just having VP discussions on particular topics. We need a structure where cross-divisional front-line individuals come together. One suggestion is to have a student affairs individual designated to each college, and that would attend college council meetings to hear the academic perspective and provide the student affairs perspective.

There is a gap between student affairs and academic affairs. An example is the “Leader at Ship” program through student affairs – this program was not widely known about in academic affairs until after the fact. If student affairs and academic affairs communicated better they could work together to better promote programs.

Strategy R:

Streamline and coordinate periodic data collection, assessment, and reporting processes at the department, college, and university level to provide relevant and timely information and to facilitate sound decision making. (Supports Goals/Objectives 1-1 thru 1-4, 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-5, 3-1, 3-2, 4-1 thru 4-5, 5-2 thru 5-4)

We need to do a better job of distributing the results of periodic institutional surveys such as the NSSE – National Survey of Student Engagement. These give us important and useful information about university trends and faculty/student engagement. Ships’ results are available online at http://www.ship.edu/IRP/NSSE_Results/.